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Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Discussion paper contributed by the trade unions*

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* The views and opinions expressed in the present discussion paper are those of the trade unions and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

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'Plough to Plate' Approaches to Food and Agriculture

Trade unions will be represented at the CSD2000 Dialogue Session by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), which together have over 130 million members in 137 countries and territories. Desired outcomes for the CSD2000 Dialogue Session include:

• **Agricultural workers** and their trade unions to be recognized as a distinct group for the implementation of Agenda 21, Chapter 14 on Agriculture and to recognize the Chairman's report of the FAO/Netherlands conference on MFCAL (see Part Two): "*...agricultural workers and other involved stakeholders must be involved directly*" in implementation the World Food Summit Plan of Action;

ILO Core labour standards: Workers' participation in workplace actions to be enhanced by recognising their freedom to organise and bargain collectively to employment equality and abolition of child or forced labour;

ILO Health &Safety Instrument for agriculture workers: Support for a new ILO Convention proposed in June/July 2000;

Public & occupational health: CSD to support implementation of the WHO World Declaration & Plan of Action on Nutrition through workplace-based education; Agenda 21, Chapter 16 should be reviewed to consider a proposed plan of action on food quality and safety, related to biotechnology & GMO's;

Workplace indicators to be supported as a means of promoting a sustainable system of agricultural production and food industry;

Land reform for sustainable development: Coherent land reform to be used as the basis of planning for a sustainable food system;

MFCAL and agricultural workers: FAO concept of 'Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land' to be supported but also revised, to recognize the role of waged agricultural workers and core labour standards;

Transparency & workplace education;

Guidelines for Multinationals; Companies in food & agriculture to be made accountable for investment and production decisions;

Capacity building & developing countries: Concrete steps to enable less developed countries and their workers to participate fully in a sustainable agriculture and food;

Distribution inequities & poverty to be addressed through effective planning, employment as well as land and incomes policies;

'Business Entrepreneurship': Governments to support previous CSD Dialogue Sessions approaches to management and a role for workers in sustainable development.

1. 'Plough to Plate' approaches: A triangle of issues

For hundreds of millions of workers around the world, feeding themselves and their family is a major challenge. Everyone requires adequate and safe nourishment. However, as we enter the new Millennium, this basic goal is beyond the reach of nearly a billion of the world's people.

A sustainable approach to food and agriculture begins with an understanding of the way in which current patterns of food consumption and production[1] relate to people's ability to buy food that is safe, adequate, and nutritious, and to the conditions of those who produce our food. The dominant problem today is not with insufficient production of food; rather; it is with the distribution of the benefits[2]. Large segments of the world's population cannot afford to buy the food they require, and lack access to land to produce their own food in sustainable ways. In addition, much of the world's food is produced under unacceptable conditions, especially for waged agricultural workers[3], who are ironically amongst those least able to access the food they need. In brief, current agricultural production and food systems are unsustainable in terms of:

- Distribution;
- Impacts on the natural environment;
- Impacts on producers and their communities;
- Impacts on wage agricultural workers;
- Public and occupational health, nutrition and food safety.

2. Roles for Workers and Trade Unions

[1] **Definitions in this paper**: *agricultural production* refers to the production of agricultural food crops, animal products or commodities. The *food industry* refers to all other aspects of the food chain.
[2] See FAO, State of Food & Agriculture, 1999.
[3] **Core labour standards**: Agenda 21, Ch. 29 signaled a commitment by governments to recognize a special role for workers and trade unions in the implementation of change at the workplace. CSD98 proposed that core labour standards, linked to workplace health & safety become key features of this.

Workers and trade unions are well-positioned to promote a sustainable system of agricultural production and food that would 'spill-over from workplaces to families and communities.

a) Workers are the backbone of food production: Approximately 1.3 billion people work in 'agricultural production' - a full half of the world's labour force. Our focus is on the 450 million waged agricultural workers who are involved in the production of agricultural food crops and animal products or commodities. Workers are in a position to promote solutions for more sustainable patterns of production and consumption in all aspects of the food system: a) production of food and of input products; b) transportation & storage; b) packaging and merchandising; c) marketing, distribution, & sales; d) tourism, recreation, and leisure; e) waste management and recycling facilities; and e) supply or waste of water and energy for food production. Positive employment policies would not only assure them more equitable access to food; they would also serve to address key problems of agricultural production and the food industry.

b) Workers are the world's food consumers: With wage agricultural workers as notable exceptions, trade union members are amongst the most fortunate workers in the world, because they can generally afford their basic food needs, as compared to non-unionized counterparts. They are also in a better position to shape new attitudes and practices as consumers. Workers form the bulk of the food buying public and are in a unique position to support public policies and measures to implement local, national and international change.

c) Involvement of workers and trade unions makes substantial change possible Deterioration of our biodiversity, wildlife habitat, soil, air and water quality must be a basic concern for all people. Trade unions are in a position to engage members in action to implement policies in the workplace, and throughout the world's food system.

3. Addressing Barriers to Worker Involvement

a) **Current barriers to worker and trade union involvement** must be recognized and addressed. Foremost among these is **"Taylorism"**, which describe the relationship of employers to workers by dictating that *conception* belongs to management, and that workers simply *execute* predetermined tasks. Solutions require the full engagement of workers as consumers and producers; not just as 'labour power', but as a creative and caring human force.

b) Recognition of basic workers' rights[4] including the right to organize is a first step to ensuring a democratic workplace where change must begin. Core labour standards, employment equity and the prohibition of child or forced labour are priorities. The rights of **waged agricultural workers** must be a special focus for CSD2000. They must be recognized as equal partners for the implementation of Chapter 14, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development.

c) Workplace based education and training must supplement workplace target-setting and implementation by eliciting worker involvement in enterprise auditing, assessments and evaluations. As well, they must build on joint programs for workplace health and safety, and integrate training objectives with current trade union programs, wherever applicable.[4]

PART 1: Agriculture Production & Food Consumption

1. The benefits of productivity: Food for the public or for profit?

Rising productivity in agriculture and food production has made great leaps in our ability to provide the world with food. Productivity refers to *food rate output, relative to cost of labour, capital and energy inputs employed to support its production.* Current trends seek to lower input costs, whilst reaping benefits from sales and marketing. Food productivity has increased dramatically because of improved techniques, machines and automation as well as use of chemicals, pesticides and biocides. Recent advances in biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) will further feed into this process. The question that now remains for all of us is: *For what public purpose should increased food productivity rises be encouraged in the future and how should the benefits be more directed to promoting a sustainable food system?*

Today, the lion's share of profits from productivity increases goes to those who own, market and control production and distribution. Productivity has created new sources of wealth, and has been a driving force for change. However, its promise to feed the world's hungry has yet to be fulfilled. The challenge facing the CSD is to address productivity issues as they apply to the worst features of our inadequate food distribution policies.

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[4]Training: *Convention 142 Human Resources Development*, 1975 provides for policies and programmes of vocational guidance and vocational training, closely linked with employment.

2. The downward spiral of an unsustainable food system

(a) World hunger and poverty continue;[5]

(b) Developing countries get a raw deal, receiving too few benefits from the food industry;

(c) Food is produced primarily for profit, secondarily for public health;

(d) **Recognition of basic workers' rights**[6], including the right to organize, is a first priority;

(e) Workers in the food system are under-recognized;

(f) Agricultural workplaces are dangerous;

(g) Child labour is rampant and female workers are exploited;

(h) Unemployment grows with productivity and from lost tenant or family farm holdings;

(i) Environmental degradation has reached crisis levels. Our main concerns in this area relate to

- Dangerous Chemicals with the intensification of agriculture through increased inputs: e.g., pesticides, veterinary products and fertilizers.
- Reduced water quality with expansion of irrigated acreage, and use of toxic inputs
- Unsustainable relationship to animals and plants 'Factory farming', has a particularly devastating effect on biodiversity, as well as wildlife habitat and landscape;

(j) Increased control by fewer and larger companies and financial institutions.

3. Sustainable agriculture for the health & well-being of all citizens

A major reorientation must correct the inadequate distribution of income and access to food, to more evenly share the benefits of rising productivity, especially for those who work to bring the food to our tables (see Land Reform in Part Two).

a) Promoting wide-spread public health through worker food and nutrition programmes: Signatories to the *World Declaration and Plan of Action on Nutrition* (WHO/FAO 1992) agreed to promote production and consumption of nutritional foods as a way to ensure public health and

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[5] 'Food security' depends on access to enough safe and nutritious food to lead a healthy and active life..

[6] Refers to the Right to Organise (i.e., form democratic trade unions) and to engage in collective bargaining; as prescribed in ILO *Convention 87: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise*, 1948 and ILO *Convention 98: Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining*.

reduce or eliminate the causes of major diseases and illnesses leading to premature death. Many countries are taking concrete steps to promote healthier diets amongst their populations; but there is a need to focus on workplace-based programmes which pay attention to such factors as:

- Individual health and well-being of workers;
- Health deficiencies and food nutrition, including job-related needs;
- Consumption of vegetables, fruits, raw products and leafy greens;
- Nutrition for young and aging workers;
- Infant feeding & nutrition of female workers;
- Nutrition for sick and injured workers;
- Refined & industrially-processed foods;
- Fat, animal products, and carbohydrates;
- Biotechnology or genetically-altered foods;
- Addictions to alcohol, drugs, caffeine, sugar, tobacco, and pharmaceutical products,

There are endless possibilities for worker-based education programs as a vehicle for promotion of public health with respect to food.

b) Promoting occupational health & safety as a springboard to public health [7]: A 1999 WHO meeting of Ministers called on member countries to link occupational health and safety to programs for public health, and trade unions are now working on this. Public health programs can be linked to existing mechanisms for occupational health, & safety, adding worker nutrition as a key feature. Government programs, industrial relations, corporate practices (e.g. travel and per diem food allowances), uses of facilities (e.g. eating spaces and food privileges), and organising of events (e.g. conferences, meetings and gatherings where food is served) should be considered as opportunities for information and education.

c) Improving conditions for workers in agriculture production and the food industry: Occupational and public health among workers, particularly waged agricultural workers, deserves a particular and urgent focus. However, improvements are particularly needed for the following:

- **waged agricultural workers** who do not own or rent the land on which they work, or the tools and equipment they use, and are therefore distinct from farmers;[8]
- **women workers** who account for 20-30% of all agricultural wage employment. Their employment is often of a casual and seasonal nature and therefore difficult to measure;
- **contract workers** whose conditions of work must be standardised;
- **child workers,** whose labour must be abolished in accordance with ILO *Convention 138 Minimum Age,* (1973) and other recent conventions and agreements on child labour;
- **migrant workers and their families,** who desperately require protection for working and living conditions, at the same time as conditions of stable, local labour are promoted;
- **indigenous people** whose land and livelihood are affected must be consulted and assured compensation rights in the event of relocation in accordance with ILO instruments;.
- **family farm labour**, for which there is currently little or no effective protection;
- **forced and compulsory labour** must be abolished according to ILO *Convention #29 on Forced Labour (*1930), and ILO *Convention #105 on Abolition of Forced Labour (*1957);
- **dead, injured or sick workers**; especially as compensation or care is often unavailable.

d) Beefing up workplace health and safety with ILO Convention 155[9] Occupational risks in food and agriculture industries require that ILO *Convention 155 Occupational Safety and Health* be ratified by all countries to provide: a) co-operation at the workplace between workers and employers in the work environment, e.g., through joint health and safety committees; b) the right of workers to refuse unsafe and unhealthy work (also in the ILO Convention on the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents; c) the right to information and training; and d) specific government provision for health and safety, in the form of health and safety legislation and regulations; government resources devoted to health and safety; and an inspectorate.

e) Support for new ILO Instrument on health & safety for agriculture workers In June-July 2000, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) will consider an Instrument relating to health and safety of workers in agriculture. The new Convention will promote the WHO/FAO action

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[7] See IUF *Study of the Effectiveness of the Industry-Sponsored Safe Use Project for Pesticide Users*
[8] International Labour Organization (ILO) Sectoral Activities Programme: *Wage workers in agriculture: Conditions of employment and work.* Geneva, 1996, TMAWW/1996.
[9] **ILO Convention 155** (Occupational Safety and Health), 1981

plan for public health and extend to agriculture workers the same level of protection that exists for other workers. Such a Convention and other Instruments should be the basis for addressing:

- OH&S structures and principles;
- Chemicals & safety for chemicals at work;
- Distribution and uses of pesticides (e.g. FAO International Code of Conduct);
- Hours of work & conditions of employment;
- Safety representatives, safe systems of work, and labour inspections;
- Rural workers & their role in economic and social development;
- Employment conditions of plantation workers.

4. A call for workplace indicators of sustainable development

Trade unions employ a concept of sustainable development based on "indicators" or criteria for environmentally-sound development. The following indicators should be basis of change for workplace actions to promote a sustainable agriculture and food system: Political indicators; Economic Indicators; Social indicators; Environment indicators;• International indicators; Equality of opportunity and treatment indicators[10]; and Education & training indicators.

These indicators are described in *Worker Education Environment,* produced by ILO/ACTRAV in cooperation with trade unions in order to build capacity for environmental action among workers and their trade unions. Each of these indicators relates to existing ILO standards, including the freedom of association, employment equity and prohibition of forced or child labour, as well as health and safety in workplaces. The OECD has also undertaken to define its own indicators of

[10] Work sites must be safe for women, free from sexual harassment and other discrimination and abuse, promote access to jobs and promote affirmative action in skills training, recruitment and career development. ILO *Convention #100 on Equal Remuneration,* 1951 provides for equal remuneration for work of equal value. ILO *Convention #111 on Discrimination (employment and occupation)* 1958 promotes equality of opportunity and treatment in employment.

sustainable development.[11] Governments and intergovernmental bodies are urged to establish well-harmonised 'workplace' indicators that incorporate the above elements.

5. Applying workplace indicators to agriculture and food safety

a) Promoting change through enterprise audits, assessments & monitoring of workplaces Workers can play a positive role in designing and implementing effective tools for workplace monitoring and research. Worker assessments/audits have demonstrated that worker involvement improves their own health and safety, as well as that of the community environment.

b) Addressing food safety issues: The special case of biotechnology and genetically modified foods can be addressed using workplace indicators as they apply to:

- Allergenicity to GModified foods;
- Spreading of antibiotic resistance throughout the food chain;
- Toxicity of GModified crops to wildlife;
- Transfer of GModified genes to native species;
- Agricultural methods reliant on chemicals that have adverse effects on wildlife;
- . .nopolistic control of corporations that produce and own rights to GMO's.

c) A worker and trade union framework for 'food safety' must provide for: a) consumer information and protection, b) a strong regulatory framework, c) reliable research and science based decision-making, d) reliance on the 'precautionary principle', e) involvement of stakeholders, and f) seek workplace solutions for health and safety. It would also promote agreement in such areas as: (a) risk & hazard assessment and analysis/methodology in biotechnology, including public health risks; (b) quality attributes for nutritional content, production methods and effective regulatory compliance; (c) the role of environmental measures to address Article XX of GATT for the commercial discrimination or Technical Barriers to Trade, and how these relate to other agreements (UN, WTO, etc.); (d) cultural ethical, moral considerations in international trade rules; (e) intellectual property rights, especially where it concerns living creatures, and (f) support for the Codex Alimentarius.

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[11] Work currently in progress on *Indicators of Sustainable Development* was mandated by the OECD High Level Advisory Group on the Environment in 1997.

d) Workplace-centred 'food safety' approaches in workplaces where food safety is most at risk should become the object of joint trade union/employer enterprise initiatives for assessment and implementation. Solutions should focus on such areas as: waste management, contamination of soils, water and crops, facilities where food additives and chemicals are produced or used, or microbiological and other risk facilities, such as for slaughtering and butchery.

6. Guiding principles for a sustainable food system:

a) Community control for local self-sufficiency and reliance based on local authority and multi-stakeholder processes that operate to reverse unsustainable trends.

b) Justice, social transition and a sustainable food system: The social and employment impacts of changes to the food system must be well understood, and transition processes, supported by effective financial measures and instruments to assure workers (and farmers) that their livelihood would be secured through compensation, retraining and social support.

c) Regulatory framework for voluntary agreements to be coordinated by governments at all levels, to have the effect of supplementing and strengthening existing regulatory compliance.

d) Capacity building strategies: for developing countries and their workers to build trade, investments, technology and regulatory capability as the basis of policy decisions.

PART 2: Land for sustainable agriculture & food cycles

1. Characteristics of an unsustainable approach to land and nature

All agriculture and food depend on a single, integrated ecosystem. Current patterns of consumption and production, and in particular, a focus on productivity, make unsustainable demands on land, and other resources required for agriculture, with a negative effect on agricultural workers and their communities. Unsustainable agriculture is characterized by

- **'Factory farming'** based on a narrowly-defing use of land, relying on mechanisation, chemicals and other synthetic inputs, controlled by a few multinational interests.
- **Unsustainable use of water supplies**, especially as most recent growth in world food production has largely come from expansion of irrigated acreage.[12],.

[12] *Sustainable Management of Water in Agriculture* The Athens Workshop OECD Proceeding, 1998

- **An unsustainable relationship to nature and life** as biodiversity and wildlife are at risk from agricultural practices that seek to eradicate all competing plant and animal species.
- **An unsustainable relationship to agricultural workplaces and communities.** An increasingly untenable base for rural workers has meant the death of rural settlements.

2. The Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land

Agriculture is sustainable when it is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, culturally appropriate, and based on a holistic and scientific approach. It is characterized by resource conservation, nutrient recycling, and water and soil conservation, and a secure supply of safe, nutritious food, in harmony with natural ecosystems and viable communities[13]. It relies on local control, with workers involved in decsion-making, enterprise auditing and assessments, stock-taking, target-setting, implementation, monitoring and reporting. It also depends on capacity-building for developing countries, with resources to enable regulatory compliance. The overall aim of a sustainable, world-wide food system, is consistent with the concept of Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land as defined by the FAO as follows:

> *"Evolving from Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD), the concept of the Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land (MFCAL) encompasses the entire range of environemental, economic and social functions associated with agriculture and related land use. The concept is based on the assumption that agricultural systems are intrinsically multifunctional, and have always fulfilled more than just their primary aim of producing food, fibre and fuel. Analysis of the multifunctional character contributes to understanding the potential linkages, synergies and trade-offs that can help to achieve sustainability in agriculture and rural development. The MFCAL approach provides a policy orientated analytical framework for the achievement of SARD goals."*[14]

a) MFCAL recognises that agricultural land is where most agriculture workers live, raise families, form communities, and build a social life.[15] This approach, therefore, demands a place

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[13] The NGO Sustainable Agriculture Treaty in Rio declared that "sustainable agriculture is a model of social and economic organisation which promotes participation".

[14] "Cultivating our futures: taking stock of the multifunctional character of agriculture and land", paper prepared for an FAO/Netherlands conference on MFCAL, 12-17 September 1999.

[15] Ibid. MFCAL provides a tool for evaluating monocultural activities, dominating agriculture today.

for sustainable communities of producers and consumers who care about their environment, and promote new approaches to land, water, and resources that preserve their communities.

b) MFCAL must recognise waged agricultural workers and their trade unions as contemplated in Chapters 29, Agenda 21, as well as Chapter 14, on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD). The Chairman's Report from the FAO/Netherlands Conference on MFCAL, recognised that, "*agricultural workers and other involved stakeholders must be involved directly*" in the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. The CSD must endorse this language, add reference to trade unions and integrate respect for core labour standards into MFCAL. Landless workers and small landholders must also be recognised.[16] .

c) MFCAL and community businesses MFCAL provides for a wide variety of products and resources related to the land, creating the basis for small and medium-sized business that lead a response to public concerns about food safety and security, and are rooted in the community.

d) MFCAL and a sustainable approach to water About 70 per cent of all human freshwater consumption occurs in agriculture. MFCAL practices would increase the efficiency of water use, avoid waste, and preserve supplies (e.g., by controlling pollution and maintaining watersheds) as recommended by the Athens Workshop. At the CSD98 Dialogue Session on 'Business Entrepreneurship' trade unions highlighted a workplace approach for action on water that dealt with: a) Water consumption at the workplace; b) Water-related wastes from the workplace, c) Water-related workplace Inputs, d) Costs of community water supply; and e) Roles for water agreements that deal with water quality, supply and sanitation, urban & rural development, public health, water prices, pollution abatement, codes of conduct for water supplies[17], investment and procurement, and agriculture and climate change.

e) MFCAL and adequate registration and control of chemical and other synthetic inputs. Attention must also be given to the *Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for certain Hazardous Chemicals in International Trade* signed in 1998 by 62

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[16] The IUF is promoting closer links between waged workers, small farmers and landless workers through its *Lands and Freedom Project.*

[17] PSI, *An International Code of Conduct for Clean and Safe Drinking Water, and for Fair Labour Practices in Water Services.*

countries. Dumping of pesticides and chemicals into developing countries is a major health and safety problem for workers and a food safety concern. We therefore urge the CSD to:

- press for speedy ratification of the PIC Convention in their countries;
- support efforts to introduce pesticides onto the PIC list, targeting 'severely hazardous formulations causing health or environmental problems in developing countries;
- create advisory panels composed of representatives of trade unions, communities, industries, academia and government for purposes of evaluation and control.

3. Key elements of a sustainable system of agricultural production

a) Land reform: A sustainable system of food and agriculture requires a significant redistribution of land, resources, and income. Land reform must promote universal access to food, employment and social transition, access to land and multistakeholder involvement in decision-making, through measures which promote increased personal incomes of agriculture workers. Farmers must own their own land, or have access to it under reasonable terms, and production must be reoriented away from luxury and export-oriented production towards local needs. People must be given basic tools to produce food for themselves and governments must reduce dependencies on the world markets. (see aslo Part Four on Transnationals).

b) Attention to growing pressures on agriculture from:

- **Climate change**: Employment and environmental impacts of climate change and measures to mitigate its effects, will be more severe in agriculture than any other sector;
- **Urban development & transportation** ;
- **Forestry** The IFF[18] process has reviewed the underlying causes of deforestation, and found that forestry and agriculture can be jointly contribute to family incomes;
- **Energy & mining as determinants of agricultural land uses;**
- **Tourism:** Land conflicts between tourism and agriculture were noted at the CSD99 Dialogue Session on Tourism.

PART 3. Communication & Education for Agriculture & Food

[18] International Federation of Building and Woodworkers, *Inter-governmental Forum on Forests*

1. Providing for education, training, & information needs

Agenda 21 assigned a high priority to communication, education, and other forms of capacity-building to make sustainable development a reality, including for agriculture production and the food industry. Education and communication are required for the (i) **food consumers** about nutrition and food safety, as well as the environmental, human and social costs of its production; (ii) **agricultural producers** about production issues, nutrition, health, as well as their environment and agriculture impacts; (iii) **workers in the food system,** (particularly waged agricultural workers) to understand how to improve the conditions of work and how they can bring about needed changes through workplace actions.

2. Building the knowledge & capacity of food consumers

A primary aim of education and communication is to increase the knowledge and the skills of food consumers, necessary to make informed choices which promote public health in tandem with promoting sustainable agriculture. Focusing on workers, as the bulk of the consuming public opens the door to the "quantum leaps" in change described below.

a) Education must address the extensive advertising conducted by multinational companies that control our agriculture and food system. Advertising and corporate promotion are big business, and an international commitment is required to limit and counter its effects. It will requires greater attention to public education, research and scientific activity, and regulatory standards and monitoring of the food industry, as well as a major commitment to capacity-building.

b) Transparency is the key to public awareness requiring research, decision-making and communication. It requires a commitment to the full access to information and the fundamental right to participate in decision-making. Proper labeling of products, backed by sound monitoring and reporting of production processes, must be assured as well as provisions for appeals of decisions related to approvals, permits and licensing. All this must occur in a well-developed regulatory framework for the production and marketing of food products, and moratoria instituted to ensure adequate review prior to implementation. It calls, as a minimum, for:

- Regulation to curtail misleading advertising,; e.g., false health and nutrition claims;

- Consumer education, aimed at school children and the public, provided by government, schools, consumer groups and trade unions;
- Trustworthy labeling and certification to encourage wise food buying habbits;
- Intellectual property rights that allow worker involvement and information.

c) Workers are in the best position to know about problems in the current system of production. Transparency is therefore best served when they are secure and confident in employment, educated on their rights and responsibilities as employees and as environmental citizens, and enjoy the protection of the law. Preconditions for full and productive worker participation in education include:

- **Right to information;**
- **"Whistle-blower" protection;**
- **Right to refuse dangerous work;**
- **Right to Participate.**

Workplaces are themselves major consumers of food (see Part One, 4b.), and a focus for change. Using workplace indicators to conduct enterprise assessments (see Part One, 6.) must become common practice. Moreover, many workplaces depend on, or result in, **worker/consumer points of contact** which can become vehicles for education and information sharing.

3. Workplace approaches to education and communication

Current agriculture production practices, food habits and attitudes are deeply-ingrained in our culture and economy. A **quantum leap** in our ability to engage in communication, education, training, and information-sharing for change is called for. This involves appreciation of new concepts, such as 'multifunctionality', and increasing our access to information, which makes environmentally-responsible choices possible and capacity-building a reality.

a) Communication and education at the level of production. Our Introduction identifies 'Taylorism' as a barrier to worker involvement. Quantum leaps in changes cannot take place unless **employers recognize workers as human beings**, not just means of production. Such a change would foster behaviour patterns that go beyond narrow precepts of just meeting minimum standards, to that of promoting the full health and well-being of workers, including for nutrition and other health factors. Engaging with workers in this way would build awareness of

environmental and social issues and foster new attitudes towards consumption at work, in homes and in communities. Education, and information systems developed for occupational health and safety can serve as a **springboard** to programs for agricultural workers, farmers, communities and consumers. As well, vocational training, improvement of skills, when undertaken in the context of an approach to lifelong learning, can equip workers, to participate in and influence change.

b) **The educational role of workers & the industrial relations process:** Given their place in the production process, workers can serve as teachers and promoters of consumer behaviour that relates to sustainable forms of agriculture. Workers and employers seeking improvements to workplaces could become a basis for education. **Enterprise assessments/audits** can help meet Agenda 21 objectives, through improvements to production and become a tool for implementing a sustainable food system. Reliable uses of **eco-labels** can supplement educational activities.

4. Promoting an educational role for other stakeholders

a) Integrating worker and consumer education as part of the public education system. Education International (EI), an International Trade Secrecretariat (ITS) for the world's educators has developed models for public education that could promote new attitudes and practices in the world's public school systems.

b) A role for NGOs & consumer and agriculture organisations. Well-informed food consumers would be more willing to accept 'quantum leaps' in changes. Trade unions are willing to enter into productive partnerships with NGOs, including consumer and agriculture organizations, to implement real change.

c) A role for public sector research and information. Information for public and worker education requires adequate funding for independent research, and monitoring for which companies should be required to pay a levy. Government inspectors and inspection systems can become instruments of change, especially with respect to voluntary agreements that supplement regulation or standards. An effective science policy must underlie all government decision-making and be independent from the agricultural and food investment interests. Processes which

weaken scientific input (e.g., commercialisation) must be avoided, and clear and transparent procedures be in place to resolve conflicts of interest within the community.

d) An educational role for international agencies, standards and agreements. Agenda 21 recognises workers; rights, working conditions, and health and safety as sustainable development issues. Education of workers should include: a) ILO *Convention #155 Occupational Safety and Health*; b) ILO *Convention # 142 Human Resources Development,* for vocational guidance and training linked with employment; c) *ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, which contain the central features of all ILO Conventions; d) *Multilateral Environmental Agreements,* especially with respect to environmental sections of trading agreements; and e) a new ILO Instrument for the health and safety of agricultural workers proposed in June/July, 2000

e) The need for international capacity-building Agenda 21 noted capacity-building as a basis for sustainable development. Education about such issues as land reform and workplace joint employer-worker enterprise assessments/audits as a way of meeting community targets in developing countries. In addition, the development of environmentally-sound technologies is a priority areas for the international community. The capacity to communicate and educate is key to all of the areas we have identified, as a key to bridging the gap between producers and consumers, and to counteracting the growing influence of multinationals in this field.

5. Education, regulatory compliance and voluntary agreements

Voluntary Agreements (VA's) must supplement or strengthen regulatory compliance, as a means of promoting sustainable development. Almost all VAs concern changes to workplaces, where workers can help monitor and report on their progress in meeting stated aims. Education and training is needed to improve on current workplace monitoring, record-keeping, and reporting mechanisms, including for workplaces in developing countries. **Collective agreements** are ideally-suited to the reality of workplace and lessons should be drawn from them, as models for implementation of VAs. Collective agreements address particular workplace problems faced by the food and agricultural worker and are used to remedy problems such as: exposure to chemicals and other synthetic inputs, food, improvements in living and eating spaces, clean water, and a chemical-free living environment. Collective agreements can help maximize the educational opportunities in the workplace over a host of issues, including for VAs.

PART 4 Globalisation, liberalisation & investment patterns

1. The effects of globalisation on our agriculture and food system

Security of food and water, is a fundamental human right, but economic relations deny this right to millions around the world, as well as having adverse effects on the natural environment, employment, and other social requirements of the workers who provide the labour.

a) Assessing the effect of globalisation on distribution The merits of globalisation must be measured relative to its implications for community and natural environments; e.g., in the ability of the world's people to feed themselves. After a period of expansion in world food supply, world's per capita agriculture production began stagnating in the 1990's, with the result that the number of countries suffering a **food deficit** rose drastically from 15 in 1994 to 29 in 1997, with more than half in Africa.[19] Ironically, the decade of the most rapid expansion in world trade in history, saw a marked drop in access to adequate food by the people producing it.

A decade of sustained liberalisation has exacerbated **malnourishment** and **starvation** as aspects of worldwide poverty. In 1969, the gap between the richest fifth and the poorest fifth of the world's population was about 30:1; by 1990, it increased to 60:1; and in 1999, it is 74:1. Three decades of liberalisation has increased the **gap in distribution of wealth** by more than 135 per cent The richest fifth now account for about 86 per cent of all consumption, while the poorest fifth account for 1 per cent. Access to food and other benefits of agriculture is only one aspect.

b) **The financial squeeze on farmers, small producers, and businesses** has forced them to convert to increasingly unsustainable methods of production, in order to survive.[20] Trade liberalisation,[21] including changes in land ownership, tenure laws and price support mechanisms have occurred without regard for social or environmental impacts. The **impetus toward higher productivity lowers per unit costs** and has led to more intensive farming methods and expanded cultivated surfaces, leading to greater deforestation, soil erosion, and loss of biodiversity.[22] The results lead to loss of livelihood, increased poverty, and urban migrations.

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[19] FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA), 1994*
[20] *Ibid*
[21] WWF, *Sustainable Trade for a Living Planet: Reforming the World Trade Organisation*, 1999.
[22] Virtually all of the negative impacts are noted in the OECD Study, *Agriculture and the Environment* OECD.

c) Addressing international debt & capacity-building: A recent OECD publication reveals that at the end of 1998, countries requiring Official Development Assistance owed a net external debt alone of US$2,565 billion,[23] with the 48 Least Developed Countries on the United Nations list, accounting for the bulk of this debt. Not only does a large part of their productive capacity go to servicing an increasingly unmanageable debt; the 'debt squeeze' has forced many into unsustainable patterns of agriculture and trade with policies that increase dependency and reduce capacity. Commercial debt repayment facilitated by World Bank/IMF involved 'structural adjustment' terms that have put immense pressure on countries to 'liberalise' their economies. Debtor nations have been induced to produce **export crops** for foreign exchange to pay off crushing debts, threatening local food security by, firstly, diverting production from local needs, and secondly, subjecting production to a regime in which prices fluctuate radically because of several factors, including weather and macroeconomic trends.

2. The role of transnational corporations & financial institutions

a) The "internationalisation" of production and consumption divides North from South and separates increasingly large, intensive agricultural operations that tend to be mechanised and which use many more commercial inputs from small-scale, subsistence agricultural operations, which are based on traditional methods. With production and trade increasingly dominated by powerful transnational corporations (TNC's), a handful now control most of the world's agricultural trade,[24] and with their size, and concentration, have managed to "internationalise" production and consumption; their emphasis on 'free trade' has predominated over calls for 'fair trade'. The policies and practices of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other inter-governmental bodies, such as the OECD, must be reviewed with respect to **corporate concentration and control** to draw attention to the:

- Concentration of control over the industry;
- Control of land & the condition of landless rural workers;
- Competitive abuse of workers' rights in order to attract investment;
- The extent & effects of vertical integration.

[23] OECD, *External Debt Statistics*, 1997 - 1998, 1999.
[24] Cargill's, Continental, etc.

- Access to capital (credit); interlocking directorships, and corporate partnerships;
- Access to technical assistance & corporate control over patterns of world trade;
- Marketing chains and their relationship to local producers and retailers;
- The use of advertising to gain control of the market;
- Investment, currency regulation and profit.

b) Corruption and collusion between government officials and companies has aggravated problems of an unsustainable agricultural production and food system. International bodies and agencies must lead to convincing actions to curb these practices; e.g., the OECD has sponsored an extensive process to review and implement guidelines to control corruption and bribery.

c) Where does the money go? The benefits of productivity translate into financial flows, which can be measured and then oriented in line with social policy. A proper understanding of these financial flows must be sought and pulic light must be shed on such areas as:

- Overall revenues and profits in different sectors of the food network;
- Expenditures in advertising and marketing by the companies which control the industry;
- The extent & diversity of holdings, financial flows in integrated companies & financial institutions;
- The distribution of benefits & land ownership & control patterns;
- Information about 'production efficiencies' and full cost accounting.

d) International trade and investment and the waged agricultural worker. Ironically, those whose work to feed the world are often least able to feed or protect themselves. Conditions are particularly deplorable for the landless rural workers. The terms and conditions of employment of many are furthermore deteriorating as globalisation has increased demands for 'flexibility', meaning a substantial increase in migrant labour, day-labourers, seasonal labourers and temporary workers, who perform the lowest-skilled tasks under substandard working conditions. They suffer in terms of pay, social protection, housing, education and medical protection, and their condition is even worse, where 'labour contractors', undermine the employment relationship.

e) Implications for safety and security of food supply Liberalised terms of trade, and control by multinationals have resulted in a free, often secretive movement of hazardous technologies

and products around the world, replacing indigenous technologies that provide employment and an economic basis for the community, and are in harmony with the nature. Changes are often thrust upon local populations by high-powered advertising promotions, and predatory pricing practices. Such trading patterns are buttressed by international agreements that make it difficult for countries to protect themselves against these practices, to set high food standards, or pay heed to the preferences and needs of their local populations; e.g., the recent EU ban on beef.

3. Agriculture, trade and investment policies for a sustainable food supply

There is an undeniable need for new trade and investment rules that support food sovereignty, the right to govern supply, and promote agricultural models based on multifunctionality.

a) Social considerations and 'Just Transition'[25] In 1999, Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations called on business and political leaders at a World Economic Forum to support core values in human rights, labour standards, and environmental practices, as defined by international agreements. Nowhere is the need greater than in agriculture production and food. Trade unions place a special priority on **'Just Transition'** as a pre-condition to ensure that workers and consumers do not bear the full burden of shifts to sustainable patterns. Employment and social implications of changes must be understood beforehand, and social transition measures, which include compensation, retraining and re-employment measures should be contemplated, to ensure a continued livelihood and an orderly conversion for workers and farmers.[26]

b) Worker and community involvement All legitimate stakeholders must play a meaningful role in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating processes[27]. As food is fundamental, all elements of civil society must be involved to harness maximum benefit from the skills, experiences, expertise, and information from all stakeholders.

c) **Policies that assign a role to Government and a strong public sector** Controversies over food supply and safety highlight the need for improved regulation of land, agriculture and the food supply, in contrast to the deregulation and international trade liberalisation that dominated

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[25] See TUAC *Note to OECD, Liaison Committee with Inter-governmental Organisations*, Paris, 1999
[26] The IUF has negotiated Codes of Conduct with two of the largest corporations in the food industry as "framework agreements" at national and local levels. They take into account legislation and collective agreements, and "Just Transition" where work is threatened by technological and structural changes.
[27] An overwhelming consensus which emerged from CSD99 Dialogue Session on Tourism

most of the 1990's. Governments have developed considerable competency in these fields, especially local authorities in transportation, energy supply, waste disposal, water supply and sewage disposal, roads, communication and increasingly, and in information technology systems. Governments are also in a position to stimulate desirable development through financial and other forms of direct assistance. They may introduce taxes, levies, grants and other financial instruments, and remove ones that perpetuate unsustainable patterns. Funding for 'just transition' programs for workers may be provided by economic measures already identified by the OECD. Impacts on employment and other social factors must be understood to minimize social costs.

d) Policy within the framework of International Agreements Given the increasingly globalised nature of agriculture and food, national rule-based systems must be backed by strong international agreements and protocols. **Standards related to processes and production methods (PPM's)** must be included in all trade negotiations, to allow consumers and governments to take measures against nations and suppliers that clearly violate environmental and other sustainable development standards - especially where these are inconsistent with Multilateral Environmental Agreements[28], and the precautionary principle. We support the call for trade policy based on fundamental labour rights, based on the 1998 *Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*. We also see the need to reinforce international *Food Safety Agreements*, and other Instrument must be further supported as elements of change.

4. Beyond narrow globalisation: A new world order

In the final years of the last Millennium, public opposition caused the world's political and business leaders to abandon a multilateral agreement on investment, and postpone WTO talks on agriculture. The 'liberalisation agenda' of the last generation must now be replaced with based on different criteria.[29] World trade must undergo a series of reforms, to respond to concerns expressed in Seattle and elsewhere, and to address the needs of the poorest nations. It must assign a central role to international bodies, such as United Nations and the ILO, and chart a more

[28] Some of these agreements related to: climate change (UNFCCC), bio-diversity, ozone depletion, endangered species, chemical accidents and safety, prior & informed consent, among others.

[29] This sentiment was expressed in the Financial Times, *If free trade is to serve its purpose, it must not result in a race to the bottom. Only negotiated, enforceable minimum standards can solve problems in basic areas like protecting workers and the environment*. R. E. Lighthizer, FT, Dec. 4-5, 1999

sustainable path towards a world prosperity that focuses on the public good. As a minimum, a New World Order must incorporate the following:

- **Support the for development of a sustainable food system;**
- **New ways of governing transnational corporations;**
- **Replace rhetoric with action on less developed countries & provide special, differential treatment;**
- **Co-operate fully with international organisations.**

World hunger and other problems of unsustainable agricultural production will be eliminated only if governments and international organisations implement substantial changes in favour of resource distribution, poverty reduction, food security and respect for core labour standards. We must abandon of policies that favour multinationals, and their technological 'fixes' of intensive agriculture and their food networks. An agenda of 'liberalisation' must be replaced with one to promote sustainable development and to serve the the public health of all citizens of the world.

A revised & more detailed version of this document will be published in time for CSD2000. Comments and feedback are welcome